

CLAIMS

1. A method of testing for the presence of infectious disease agents or host genetic markers comprising: applying a device comprising an absorbent  
5 and porous material onto the introitus of a female patient to collect vaginal discharge, either briefly as an imprint or swab, or over a period of time; encouraging air drying of at least a portion of the collected vaginal discharge while the device is  
10 proximate to the introitus; and determining the presence of infectious disease agents or host genetic markers in the at least partially dried vaginal discharge.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the device is a regular or disposable underwear.

15 3. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of storing the dried vaginal discharge in a container, without added desiccants, preservatives or other additives.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the infectious  
20 disease agent is human papillomavirus.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein the steps of determining the presence of human papillomavirus comprises nucleic acid amplification and specific identification of the amplified product(s).

25 6. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of identifying high-risk, intermediate-risk and low-risk human papillomaviruses.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the host genomic markers are of malignant or pre-malignant transformation  
30 of cellular DNA.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the host genomic markers are of cellular mRNA.

9. The method of claim 8 where the mRNA is selectively amplified, identified and quantified.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein the infectious disease agents are sexually transmitted disease agents.

5 11. The method of claim 10 where the presence of sexually transmitted disease agents is used as surrogate markers to trigger screening for cervical cancer.